PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON THE STATUS OF

WOMEN

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Annual Report

2007-2008

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

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September 8, 2008

Honourable Joan Burke
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Burke:

On behalf of the members of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, it is my pleasure to submit our 2007-2008 Annual Report in accordance with the guidelines for Annual Performance Reports for Category 2 Government Entities.

This report was prepared under my direction. My signature reflects council members' accountability for the results contained in this report.

Sincerely,

Leslie MacLeod
President/CEO

LM/sba

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1.0 Organizational Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is an arms-length, external agency which reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. It was established by the Provincial Government in 1980 and received legislative standing with the introduction of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*.

The Advisory Council consists of 11 members, including a President/CEO and Vice-President. It was created to advise Government on issues affecting the status of women and to raise awareness of women's issues within the general public.

The President/CEO is a full-time staff position filled through a public service competition. The successful candidate is appointed to a three-year term by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

Members of the Advisory Council are selected following a nomination call by the Women's Policy Office. They are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council for three-year terms of office and are eligible for reappointment.

1.1 Advisory Council Members

Our members bring a wealth of diverse experience and feminist analysis to the work of the Advisory Council, along with a shared commitment to advancing the status of all women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

In June 2007, the Advisory Council warmly welcomed the appointment of Annie Evans as a representative from the Inuit women's community. We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with her.

2007-2008 Council Members:

- Leslie MacLeod, President/CEO – St. John's
- Phyllis Artiss, Vice-President – St. John's
- Mary Pia Benuen – Sheshatshiu
- Annie Evans – Makkovik

- Jackie Jenkins – Grand Falls-Windsor
- Yamuna Kutty – St. John's
- Carolyn Lavers – Port aux Choix
- Vanessa MacArthur – Port aux Basques
- Michelle Murdoch – St. John's
- *Phyllis Seymour, Interim Vice-President – Little Bay Islands

**Vice-President Phyllis Artiss was on leave of absence from November 2007 to April 2008. Phyllis Seymour was appointed as the interim Vice-President for this time period.*

1.2 Staff

In the 2007 budget process, the Advisory Council was successful in receiving increased funding for the reclassification of two staff positions and the creation of one new position. As a result, we increased our staff complement from three to four full-time staff:

- Sandy Abbott, Office Manager
- Danielle Finney, Communications Director
- Leslie MacLeod, President/CEO
- Elaine Wychreschuk, Policy Analyst

See **Appendix A** for Advisory Council member and staff biographies.

1.3 Mandate, Vision and Mission

Our Mandate:

Our mandate is laid out in Section 3 of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*. It reads as follows:

3. *The advisory council shall:*

a) Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the minister refers to the advisory council for consideration;
b) Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the advisory council feels appropriate;
c) Bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to women; and
d) Establish the general policies that will government [sic] the organization, administration and operation of the advisory council.

Our Vision:

Equality, equity and inclusion for women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Mission:

As part of our business planning process in 2006-2007, we developed the following mission statement to guide our work through 2011:

By March 31, 2011, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have enhanced its representation in priority areas related to advancing the status of women.

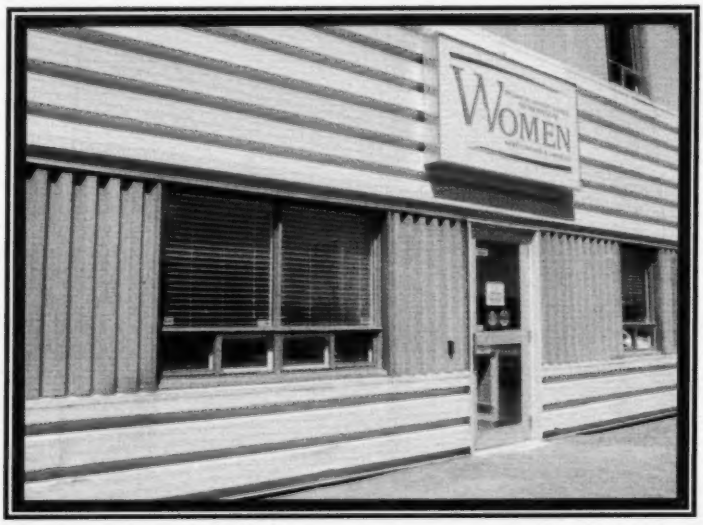
1.4 Values

Advisory Council members and staff work from a feminist perspective to advance the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 2006, we developed the following set of values to guide our work: commitment, responsiveness, inclusiveness, learning, safety and celebration.

See **Appendix B** for a description of these values.

1.5 Physical Location

In late March 2007, we temporarily relocated to 39 Pippy Place, St. John's, NL while new publicly-tendered leased space was being renovated. In August 2007, we moved to newly renovated, accessible, leased office space at 15 Hallett Crescent, Suite 103, St. John's, NL.



1.6 Budget

In 2007-2008, our approved Provincial operating grant was $392,200. $100,000 of the proceeds from the sale of the 131 LeMarchant Road property was applied to this grant. Our operating grant for the three previous fiscal years was $297,600. The substantial increase in 2007-2008 reflects Government approval for an additional staff position, increased salaries and additional overhead costs. We were also permitted to use the remaining net proceeds of the sale for costs associated with moving the office and upgrading our office infrastructure.

1.7 Lines of Business

In keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, we have identified the following lines of business:

- Advising Government on issues affecting the status of women
- Outreach and consultation
- Public education and awareness

Advising Government on Issues affecting the Status of Women:

The focus of the Advisory Council's work is advocating for improved Government policies, programs, practices, services, legislation and budget allocations as a means to advance the equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

While the Advisory Council is not the direct agent of change, we advocate strongly for systemic change. Where possible, we help identify processes to move existing policy forward or deal with gaps. We engage in analysis, research and consultation, and develop position papers, briefs and written recommendations.

We regularly meet with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and officials of the Women's Policy Office to discuss issues and concerns.

We also provide other Government departments, ministers and senior officials with advice and recommendations related to policies, programs, initiatives, services, budget allocations and legislation that may affect the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Outreach and Consultation:

A number of women's groups deliver services and advocate for women's equality in Newfoundland and Labrador. Other equality-seeking and service organizations also engage in activities related to promoting women's equality. As much as possible, we network, consult and collaborate with these groups on specific issues affecting the status of women in our Province.

As resources permit, we host and/or participate in roundtable meetings; facilitate information exchange; and participate in local, regional and national meetings and conferences.

Public Education and Awareness

The Advisory Council engages in public education and awareness activities related to issues of women's social, legal, economic, political and cultural equality, mainly through the use of various forms of media.

As much as resources permit, we provide public feminist reaction and analysis on issues which negatively or positively affect women's equality and inclusion.

The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.

Gloria Steinem

We also create and/or circulate fact sheets, briefs, reports and other documents related to the status of women, mainly through the use of our electronic listserv and website.

2.0 Shared Commitments

Our work could never be accomplished in isolation from our many partners who share a commitment to advancing the status of women.

During 2007-2008, a positive and dynamic working relationship with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Women's Policy Office continued to strengthen our ability to fulfil our mandate and reach our goals. Throughout the year, we shared information, analysis and strategies to advance a variety of women's equality issues.

We also worked closely with the departments of Justice; Human Resources, Labour and Employment; and Health and Community Services.

We worked with many feminist groups and other community organizations including:

- Status of Women Councils
- Transition Centres and Shelters
- Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Make Work Pay Coalition
- Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre
- Regional Coalitions against Violence
- AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador
- OXFAM Canada
- Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities
- Union women's committees

We continued our representation on the board of directors of Women Interested in Successful Employment, the Women in Resource Development Committee, and the St. John's Status of Women Council. We participated on the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador Project Advisory Committee, the Steering Committee for the Coastal Women project, and planning committees for the St. John's based Sexual Violence Awareness Week and International Women's Day.

We collaborated with anti-violence organizations, as well as officials of the Violence Prevention Initiative, Department of Justice and the RCMP on important issues related to violence against women. We also developed a working relationship with the Nunatsiavut Government's new Status of Women Office.

At the national level, we participated in the annual meeting of the Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women, held in Ottawa. We also worked closely with the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Council to advance recommendations related to the governance of physicians and surgeons in our Province and across the country.

3.0 Internal Governance

3.1 Meetings and Committees

We held four, two-day in-person meetings during the year:

- June 18-19, 2007
- September 27-28, 2007
- December 6-7, 2007
- March 10-11, 2008

We established a new Communications Committee to help guide our strategic communications. Four other internal committees continued to guide the management of our organization: Finance, Governance, Personnel and Building.

3.2 Infrastructure

The former office of the Advisory Council at 131 LeMarchant Road, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador could not be made accessible to women with disabilities. This was unacceptable to our organization. In 2006-2007, Council members unanimously approved the sale of the building and authorized a public tender for leased office space. The building was sold in April 2007, and a public tender was awarded for accessible office space with a five-year lease. We moved into the newly renovated offices in August 2007.

An important feature of our new office is a large, accessible meeting room which is made available to other women's groups free of charge.

We also retrofitted our office with ergonomic furniture and up-to-date equipment and completed the development of our new website.

3.3 Staffing

In the mid-1990s, the Advisory Council lost a significant portion of its Provincial operating grant resulting in the elimination of two of the five full-time staff positions.

In the budget process for 2007, we requested a significant increase in annual funding in order to reclassify two of the job descriptions, create a new Policy Analyst position, increase the pay levels for three positions and cover increasing general operating costs. We were delighted to receive Government approval for the budget increase as requested and quickly implemented all of the staffing changes.

3.4 Business Planning

As per Government requirements, during 2007-2008, we developed a three-year plan to guide our work from April 2008 to March 2011. Print and electronic copies of our 2008-2011 Business Plan are available from our office. Word and pdf versions are available on our website.

4.0 Governance Issues

In 2007-2008, members of the Advisory Council identified three priority areas which are in keeping with our mandate and financial resources as well as Government's strategic directions related to advancing the status of women.

- Increasing our representation on Government strategic priorities
- Incorporating the diversity of women's experiences in our recommendations
- Developing a strategic approach to public awareness

4.1 Representation on Government Strategic Priorities

By focusing on this priority, we established strong working relationships with a number of departments, which enhanced our contribution to Government's strategic priorities of improving women's access to an equitable share of social and economic benefits and reducing violence.

Goal: By 2008, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have developed and implemented effective communication links to enhance its contribution to Government strategic priorities related to the advancement of issues affecting the status of women.

Measure: Developed and implemented appropriate communication links.

Indicator: Priority links with Government departments are identified.

Progress and Accomplishments:

During the year, we identified communications with the following departments as priorities:

- Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
- Women's Policy Office
- Violence Prevention Initiative
- Department of Justice
- Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Nunatsiavut Government Status of Women Office

In 2004, the rate of sexual assault in Newfoundland and Labrador was 36% higher than the national average.

Statistics Canada

Indicator: Communication processes are developed.

Progress and Accomplishments:

The President of the Advisory Council and the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women met on a regular basis and communicated about issues as they arose. The Minister attended two in-person Advisory Council meetings and was represented by her Assistant Deputy Minister at a third. We established a very positive working relationship enabling us to easily discuss issues affecting the status of women and provide advice and recommendations throughout the year.

We were in regular communication with the Women's Policy Office via phone, email and in-person meetings. This resulted in a strengthened and highly effective working relationship.

We also established a positive working relationship with the new Director of the Violence Prevention Initiative. In addition, we attended a full-day meeting of the Community Advisory Committee for the Violence Prevention Initiative and participated in a working group developing a social marketing campaign on violence against older adults.

In 2005-2006, our Province's shelters admitted 1,125 women and children fleeing violence.

Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

By mid-year, our working relationship with the Department of Justice was substantially strengthened. This provided us with additional opportunities to discuss recommendations and advice related to several important justice issues affecting women in our Province. The Minister of Justice met with us during our December and March in-person meetings, and the President and other Council members were in direct communication with the Department on various issues. Our participation on the Justice Minister's Committee on Violence against Women also continued to provide an effective forum for raising concerns, discussing significant issues and providing advice and recommendations.

The Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment is the lead Ministry for the Poverty Reduction Strategy. We established an effective working relationship with the Minister, the Director of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and other departmental officials. As a result, we were readily able to discuss issues, provide advice and present recommendations.

The Department of Health and Community Services plays a key role in the delivery of a wide range of services to women. A variety of issues arose and new services were announced during the year, including:

- Errors in hormone receptor testing for breast cancer
- Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program
- Changes to Child, Youth and Family Services
- Healthy Aging Strategy
- Regulations to protect the public from physician misconduct
- An Act to Provide for the Protection of Personal Health Information

We attended various technical briefings and media conferences. We also met with several department officials, including the Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, program directors and consultants.

The Nunatsiavut Government created a new Office Responsible for the Status of Women. In a short period of time, we developed a working relationship, shared relevant information and resources, and co-hosted meetings with Provincial officials and women in the community of Makkovik.

In 2007, Patty Pottle, the first Inuit woman elected to the Provincial Government, was appointed Minister of the newly-created Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Indicator: Scope and number of recommendations submitted to Government departments on strategic priorities including but not limited to Violence Prevention Initiative and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Progress and Accomplishments:

In 2007-2008, we provided Government with over 100 recommendations on a number of issue areas related to advancing women's economic and social equity and reducing violence against women, including the following:

Women's Economic Equality

Provincial Budget 2008: We participated in the pre-budget consultation held by the Minister of Finance and presented 37 recommendations in 22 categories. A copy of our written submission, *Equality for Newfoundland and Labrador Women,* is available from our office and on our website at *www.pacsw.ca* under "*Resources*".

Poverty Reduction Strategy: A list of our recommendations is included in our written 2008 pre-budget submission, *Equality for Newfoundland and Labrador Women.*

One in five Canadian women lives in poverty while almost half of Aboriginal women are poor.

Minimum Wage: We submitted a written recommendation based on gender analysis to increase the Provincial minimum wage to $10 per hour by 2010. We also participated in a minimum wage roundtable consultation with the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

In 2003, 70% of those earning minimum wage were women; 37% of single-parent families earned less than $10 per hour.

Statistics Canada

EI Maternity and Parental Benefits: We advised Government of the need to enhance these federal benefits within the EI program. We also supported the 11 recommendations developed by the Atlantic Advisory Committee to the Women's Network, Prince Edward Island.

EI maternity and parental benefits provide only 55% of earnings up to a maximum of $423 per week. Self-employed women are not eligible.

Women's Health

Commission of Inquiry into Hormone Receptor Testing: We provided advice on issues of importance related to the Inquiry.

Health Information Act: We participated in a formal consultation session, prepared a written submission raising several questions and concerns, and engaged in a follow-up meeting with officials.

Mental Health Care and Treatment Act: We provided recommendations related to the resources required to successfully implement the new Act and submitted two nominations for the Mental Health Review Board.

Justice Issues

Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act: We strongly advised Government not to implement this legislation. We distributed a written brief, *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act (SCAN): Why SCAN is Not Safe for Women*, to all members of the House of Assembly urging them to vote against the Act. Copies of this document are available from our office and on our website at *www.pacsw.ca*, under "*Resources*".

Treatment of Women in RCMP Lockup: We advised the Minister of Justice and RCMP officials it is unacceptable for any women to be held naked in lockup cells under any circumstances. We recommended the RCMP purchase tear-resistant clothing and improve access to mental health services within their facilities.

Regulation of Physicians and Surgeons: In collaboration with the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, we developed five recommendations to improve the protection of patients from physician misconduct. These were submitted to all Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments as well as relevant regulatory bodies. A more detailed overview of this issue can be found on our website at *www.pacsw.ca* under "*Resources*".

Family Justice Services: We met with officials of the court and the Department of Justice, including the Minister of Justice, to discuss a number of issues related to this service. We provided 25 recommendations for improving the service and circulated a draft document, *Family Justice Services in Newfoundland and Labrador: At what cost to women and children*? A copy of the final document can be found on our website at *www.pacsw.ca* under "*Resources*".

Civil Legal Aid: We advised the Minister of Justice to lobby for additional Federal funding as well as increased Provincial spending in order to improve women's access to civil legal aid for matters related to family law.

Justice Services in Labrador West: We advocated for a legal aid office and the reinstatement of full-time court services in Labrador West.

Status of Women with Disabilities

We discovered it was virtually impossible to access any information about the status of women with disabilities in our Province. Therefore, we recommended Government establish a new office focused on research and policy analysis related to the status of women, men and children with disabilities, with the capacity and resources to conduct gender analysis.

Almost twice as many women with disabilities graduate from university than men, but they are less likely to be employed; those who are employed earn less than men with disabilities or able-bodied women.

Statistics Canada

Housing

We participated in a consultation with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation on the development of a new Provincial Housing Strategy. We urged officials to incorporate the recommendations contained in the St. John's Status of Women Housing Policy Working Group 2005 document, *A Housing Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador*, including rent control. We further recommended they include a commitment to use universal design in future social housing construction and renovation.

Senior women are more likely to live alone than senior men, and they are more likely to live in poverty.

Department of Health and Community Services

Violence Prevention Initiative

We provided officials with advice on the proposed Provincial *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* and the social marketing campaign on violence against adults.

4.2 Diversity of Women's Experiences

Women are a very diverse population and Government policies, programs and strategies can affect us in vastly different ways. Women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, senior women, young women, multicultural and newcomer women, as well as other groups, experience different barriers and forms of discrimination. Policies which benefit one group of women may not benefit another and strategies designed to move women's equality forward may impede the advancement of another group.

Goal: By 2008, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have enhanced its analytical processes to ensure that the diversity of women's experiences is effectively incorporated into its recommendations.

Measure: Enhanced analytic processes.

Indicator: Developed sound practices for analytical procedures and consensus decision making.

Progress and Accomplishments:

An increased focus on incorporating the diversity of women's experiences in our analysis of the issues enhanced our ability to develop recommendations related to advancing women's equity and reducing violence against women.

Thanks to an increase in our operating grant, we were able to create and fill the new position of Policy Analyst which increased our capacity to engage in research and analysis.

During the year, we examined a number of issues including:

- Resources required for the new Provincial *Mental Health Care and Treatment Act*
- Women's experiences with Family Justice Services
- Implications of Federal Private Member's Bill C-484
- Provincial and Territorial regulations with respect to the sharing of information about physicians across jurisdictions
- Provincial *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* and similar acts in other provinces and territories
- Newfoundland and Labrador section of the CEDAW report
- Gendered analysis of Provincial minimum wage rates

We actively sought information from individual women, women's groups, unions, Government departments and agencies, and various statistical sources. This research helped increase our knowledge and understanding of women's experiences and develop recommendations.

Although we held official votes on all matters of importance, council members successfully employed a consensus decision-making approach throughout the year. Each of our committees also used this approach to develop recommendations brought forward for consideration during the year.

In addition, Council members developed and regularly employed effective email processes for identifying issues, determining priorities, sharing information and developing analysis during the months between quarterly in-person meetings.

Indicator: Employed communications tools to identify diversity in women's experiences.

Progress and Accomplishments:

During the year, members of the Advisory Council engaged in face-to-face discussions during in-person meetings, via conference calls and through regular email and telephone communication. Council and staff members brought a wide range of experience, expertise and knowledge to the discussions including regional and cultural diversity which helped broaden our collective understanding of women's experiences.

Our electronic listserv provided an effective way for over 300 women to discuss issues and share information. We also monitored the media on a daily basis for issues affecting women.

Eight Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres in the Province are experts in issues affecting women in their regions: St. John's, Gander, Central, Corner Brook, Bay St. George, Lab West and Mokami. As an important part of our outreach activities, we invited representatives of these organizations to join us for a full day during our September in-person meeting. We also participated in the first annual meeting of the Status of Women Councils/Women's Centres, the Women's Policy Office and the Advisory Council which was held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In addition, we participated in regular conference calls with the Status of Women Councils/Women's Centres and the Women's Policy Office. These meetings and calls provided us with valuable opportunities to share information, discuss issues, develop positions and increase our connections.

We also met with several other women's groups and equality-seeking organizations including:

- Women with disabilities
- Inuit women
- Women providing community-based services to women and their families in Sheshatshiu
- Fish Food and Allied Workers Union Provincial Women's Committee
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour Women's Committee
- Avalon Labour Women's Network
- Newfoundland and Labrador division of the Canadian Federation of Students
- Central Status of Women Council regarding their research project, *Hear us! Mature Women Speak*

We held a number of conference calls with Status of Women Councils/ Women's Centres, Transition Houses and Shelters in order to gather information about women's experiences with the expansion of Family Justice Services in various regions of the Province. This collaborative effort helped us identify a number of serious issues and develop a set of draft recommendations to improve the service.

We participated in a number of workshops and conferences which increased our knowledge and provided additional insight into women's experiences of inequality. These included:

- Plenary sessions of the National Aboriginal Women's Summit
- Second annual Provincial Aboriginal Conference
- Inuit Women's Conference
- National Association of Women in the Law workshop, "Improving Maternity and Parental Benefits outside of Quebec" and Mothering Rights Conference
- National Women in Business Conference
- Violence Prevention Initiative Stakeholders Conference
- Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour Policy Conference and Provincial Women's Conference
- Feminist Alliance for International Action National Symposium
- Continuing Legal Education Seminars on Family Law and Elder Abuse

Our involvement on the various boards and committees listed in Section 3.0 also provided us with valuable information. In addition, we utilized online sources to gather information about the status of women in areas such as violence and economic status.

Indicator: Enhanced capacity of the Advisory Council to represent the diversity of women's experiences.

Progress and Accomplishments:

As described in the first two parts of this section, we actively increased our connections with diverse groups of women including:

- Women with disabilities
- Union women
- Students
- Aboriginal women
- Multicultural women

The Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador identifies a lack of appropriate employment as the key barrier for nearly all immigrant women regardless of their level of education or previous work experience.

The activities listed under the previous two indicators increased our knowledge of a range of issues affecting women in our Province and our ability to represent the diversity of women's experiences. These connections and activities are also reflected in the range of recommendations listed in Section 5.2 of this report including those related to justice issues, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, increases to the minimum wage and other pre-budget recommendations.

4.3 Public Awareness

In keeping with our mandate to bring before Government and the public issues of importance and concern to women, as well as Government's strategic direction to ensure women share equitably in social and economic benefits and reduce violence, we decided to develop a more strategic approach to our public awareness activities.

By placing an emphasis on this priority, we were able to bring attention to 20 public policy areas, including those related to violence against women and women in leadership and decision-making positions.

Goal: By March 31, 2008, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have developed a strategic approach to focus public awareness activities.

Measure: Developed a strategic approach.

Indicator: The development of a Council-approved document outlining but not limited to a process for identifying priorities (including criteria) and public awareness strategies.

Progress and Accomplishments:

As a first step to increasing our capacity to develop a strategic approach to public awareness activities, we created the reclassified position of Communications Director. The position was successfully filled in May 2007.

We also set up a Communications Committee with representation from Council members, staff and external groups. The Committee held a one-day professionally-facilitated communications strategy workshop which helped us develop the major components of a communications strategy.

We developed a council-approved media response protocol which helps us identify when to publicly respond to issues as well as appropriate methods for communicating our key messages. The protocol also helps identify opportunities to strategically engage in collaborative media with other equality-seeking organizations, to the extent possible given limitations on time and resources.

During the year, we issued eight media releases, published eight forum pieces and letters to the editor, and gave 54 radio, TV and newspaper interviews on a wide range of issues affecting women, including:

- Lack of multiple sclerosis drug coverage and its impact on women
- Supporting health care providers who perform pap tests
- Analysis of the Provincial budget and its impact on women
- Failure of the new process for allocating funding under the Federal Canada Summer Jobs program
- Analysis of the *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act* including its potential impact on women
- Concerns regarding a psychiatrist who was suspended in Newfoundland and Labrador and allowed to practice in NB even though he had agreed to an undertaking not to practice in that region; failure of self-regulating medical bodies to protect women and recommendations for improvement

- Concerns a woman has never been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador; public call for the Federal Government to appoint a woman; disappointment with the missed opportunity to advance a woman in this leadership role in 2007-2008

Since 1949, we have had 12 male Lieutenant Governors. We are the only Province that has never appointed a woman to the position.

Women belong in the house ... and the Senate.
Author Unknown

- Sexual Violence Awareness Week
- Poverty and the Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Proposed Provincial family growth strategy
- Mokami Status of Women Council Purple Heart Campaign; improvements needed to the Provincial justice system
- Overview of issues discussed during our September 2007 in-person meeting including violence against women, policing, access to civil legal aid and housing issues
- Concerns regarding women in the RCMP lockup in Labrador being stripped and held naked in a cell; a public call for this to never happen again
- Support for women who were assaulted by a local physician and relief he was found guilty on a number of charges
- Concerns about a private Federal member's Bill C-484; if passed by Parliament, the bill would introduce a conflict between fetal and women's rights
- History and importance of International Women's Day
- Concerns regarding judicial responses to men who repeatedly assault their intimate partners
- Murder-suicides in Newfoundland and Labrador; causes of violence against women; the need for violence prevention and intervention
- Additional issues related to violence against women including sentencing provisions and the use of violence within everyday language
- Value of Provincial and Federal gender budgeting

Aboriginal women are three times more likely than non-Aboriginal women to experience spousal violence; and Aboriginal women aged 25-44 are five times more likely than other Canadian women of the same age to die of violence.
Statistics Canada/Native Women's Association of Canada

We also organized and participated in a media training workshop for women's organizations in the St. John's area and met with other groups to examine a variety of issues related to discussing violence against women in the media. This enhanced our capacity to engage in collaborative efforts.

Our website is an important part of our communications strategy. It provides women with an introduction to our organization, information about issues; access to reports, briefs and media releases; links to other women's groups; and other relevant information. During the summer of 2007, we completed the development of a new accessible website which is now hosted by a local company. We will continue to develop this valuable resource.

For a number of years, our electronic listserv has provided a connection for women throughout the Province, providing an important way for women to share information and perspectives. In June 2007, the American company which hosted our previous listserv experienced technical difficulties and our listserv was destroyed. We quickly worked with a local IT specialist to develop a new listserv which is now hosted locally. By the end of the year, over 250 women joined the new listserv and we were posting an average of 118 messages per month.

5.0 Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

Women in our Province continue to experience inequality. In the years ahead, there will be many opportunities to improve the status of women as well as challenges which will threaten to set us back on the long road to equality.

It is getting harder to find accessible, safe, affordable housing in every region of the Province. Violence against women is still a significant problem in our communities. Women's access to justice services for family law matters needs to be improved.

Much of the work which has traditionally been done by women such as child care and home support remains undervalued and underpaid.

Women continue to be under-represented in decision-making and leadership positions in all levels of government.

Following the 2007 Provincial election, women made up 23% of our elected members and 27.8% of the Cabinet, putting us in 5th place across the country.

EI maternity and parental leave provisions remain insufficient to meet the needs of women and their families. While the number of regulated child-care spaces has gradually increased, many women continue to find child care and early learning programs unavailable and/or unaffordable. Student debt load remains a significant financial burden and women struggle to meet monthly payments.

70% of Newfoundland and Labrador mothers work outside the home but only 8% of children had access to regulated child care in 2006.

Statistics Canada

Although more women have completed post-secondary education and are working full time throughout the year, the wage gap between women and men continues to increase. Newfoundland and Labrador is generating greater wealth than ever before. However, economic boom times lead to greater disparity between the rich and the poor unless public policies are skilfully redesigned to share the wealth with all citizens.

In 2005, Newfoundland and Labrador women earned only 65.4 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Statistics Canada

Of course, it is not possible for one organization to effectively tackle all of the issues facing women. In our 2008-2011 Business Plan, we selected four specific goals, making the commitment that by March 2011, we will have:

- Conducted analysis and provided advice and/or recommendations to Government to further women's equality within key areas of the justice system
- Provided advice and/or recommendations related to advancing women's equality including, but not limited to, the provision of family supports for women working in non-traditional settings and addressing barriers to women's representation in elected positions and decision-making positions

Since 2004, the number of women registering for apprenticeship programs in non-traditional trades in the Province has increased by 35%.

Department of Education

- Provided ongoing advice and/or recommendations on key Government strategies including, but not limited to, the Violence Prevention Strategy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Developed focused public awareness strategies in response to priority issues related to advancing the status of women

For the next three years, we will work on these and other priorities as they arise. We will continue to collaborate with diverse members of the women's community to analyze issues, develop recommendations and advocate for policies and programs which advance women's equality. We will strive to maintain effective working relationships with Government departments and agencies, and we will continue to bring key issues and feminist perspectives to the attention of the general public.

6.0 Audited Financial Statements

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors
Provincial Advisory Council on the Status
of Women - Newfoundland and Labrador
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

I have audited the balance sheet of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women - Newfoundland and Labrador as at 31 March 2008 and the statements of revenues, expenses and surplus, and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Council's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In my opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2008 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

JOHN L. NOSEWORTHY, CA
Auditor General

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador
5 June 2008

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

BALANCE SHEET
31 March

	2008	2007
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	$ 711	$ -
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	11,202	3,048
Prepaid expenses (Note 3)	5,196	2,078
	17,109	5,126
Capital assets (Note 4)	35,235	30,749
	$ 52,344	$ 35,875
LIABILITIES AND SURPLUS		
Current		
Bank indebtedness	$ -	$ 1,354
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	8,482	9,690
Long-term debt payable within one year	-	14,857
Deferred revenue (Note 5)	11,000	-
	19,482	25,901
Surplus	32,862	9,974
	$ 52,344	$ 35,875

Commitments (Note 6)

See accompanying notes

Signed on behalf of the Council: Leslie MacLeod, **President** — Michelle Murdoch, **Member**

Office of the Auditor General

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND SURPLUS

For the Year Ended 31 March

	2008	2007
REVENUES		
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador operating grant (Note 7)	$ 292,200	$ 297,600
Miscellaneous	-	9,154
Interest	13	2,594
	292,213	309,348
EXPENSES		
Amortization	13,828	4,229
Council meetings	42,125	38,124
Interest on long-term debt	678	836
Moving expenses	4,847	3,913
Operating expenses	40,975	50,430
Outreach	20,228	11,376
Rent	37,831	-
Salaries and employee benefits	249,312	187,577
	409,824	296,485
Excess of revenues over expenses (expenses over revenues) before gain on sale of property	(117,611)	12,863
Gain on sale of property (Note 7)	140,499	-
Excess of revenues over expenses	22,888	12,863
Surplus (Deficit), beginning of year	9,974	(2,889)
Surplus, end of year	$ 32,862	$ 9,974

See accompanying notes

Office of the Auditor General

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the Year Ended 31 March

	2008	2007
Cash flows from operating activities		
Excess of revenues over expenses	$ 22,888	$ 12,863
Gain on sale of property (Note 7)	(140,499)	-
Adjustment for non-cash items		
Amortization	13,828	4,229
	(103,783)	17,092
Changes in non-cash working capital		
Accounts receivable	(8,154)	4,673
Prepaid expenses	(3,118)	(831)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(1,208)	(6,945)
Deferred revenue	11,000	-
	(105,263)	13,989
Cash flows from financing activities		
Repayment of long-term debt	(14,857)	(4,997)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of capital assets	(39,614)	(13,678)
Net proceeds from sale of property (Note 7)	161,799	-
	122,185	(13,678)
Net increase (decrease) in cash	2,065	(4,686)
Cash (bank indebtedness), beginning of year	(1,354)	3,332
Cash (bank indebtedness), end of year	$ 711	$ (1,354)

See accompanying notes

Office of the Auditor General

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

31 March 2008

Authority

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women - Newfoundland and Labrador (the Council) was established under the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act.* The purpose of the Council is to advise the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, the Government and the public on matters of interest and concern to women. Its affairs are managed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

1. Significant accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared by the Council's management in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Outlined below is the significant accounting policy followed.

Capital assets

All capital assets are capitalized at cost at the time of acquisition. Amortization for capital assets is calculated using the methods described below based on the expected future useful life of the assets as follows:

Furniture and office equipment	Straight line, 5 years
Computer hardware and software	Straight line, 3 years
Leasehold improvements	Straight line, 5 years

2. Accounts receivable

	2008	2007
Harmonized sales tax	$ 11,202	$ 3,048

There is no allowance for doubtful accounts since all amounts are considered collectible.

3. Prepaid expenses

	2008	2007
Insurance	$ 927	$ 174
Property tax	-	613
Rent	2,467	-
Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission	1,802	1,291
	$ 5,196	$ 2,078

Office of the Auditor General

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN - NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
31 March 2008

4. Capital assets

	2008			2007
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Land	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 21,300
Furniture and office equipment	26,951	5,885	21,066	1,980
Computer hardware and software	23,767	11,657	12,110	7,469
Leasehold improvements	2,574	515	2,059	-
Total	$ 53,292	$ 18,057	$ 35,235	$ 30,749

5. Deferred revenue

Deferred revenue represents an advance on 2008-09 Province of Newfoundland and Labrador operating grant.

6. Commitments

In March 2007, the Council entered into a 3 year agreement for the lease of a photocopier requiring quarterly lease payments of $1,017. Also, in March 2007, the Council entered into a 5 year agreement to lease a postage meter requiring monthly lease payments of $28. In August 2007, the Council entered a 5 year agreement for the lease of office space requiring monthly lease payments of $2,618 with an option to renew for an additional 5 years at the same terms and conditions.

7. Gain on sale of property

In April 2007, the Council sold the building located at 131 LeMarchant Road.

Proceeds from sale	$ 175,000
Real estate fees	(9,889)
Adjustment for siding	(1,500)
Legal fees	(859)
Survey report	(741)
Other fees/adjustments	(212)
Net proceeds from sale	161,799
Net book value of property	(21,300)
Gain on sale	$ 140,499

Office of the Auditor General

7. Gain on sale of property (cont.)

In January 2007, Treasury Board provided direction to the Council relating to the disposition of proceeds from the sale of the property. Treasury Board directed that proceeds first be applied to pay off the existing mortgage, associated legal and related fees and to offset one-time moving costs, including any interim overlapping lease costs that may occur. Council was permitted to retain any remaining balance for its general operations but with this amount to be deducted from the 2007-08 operating grant provided by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Accordingly, $100,000 of the net proceeds was retained by the Council for its general operations with Government's operating grant reduced by the same amount.

8. Pensions

Council staff are subject to the *Public Service Pensions Act.* Employee contributions are matched by the Council and remitted to the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador Pooled Pension Fund from which pensions will be paid to employees when they retire. The Council's share of pension contributions for 2008 was $17,423 (2007 - $12,428).

9. Economic dependence

As the Council's revenue consists primarily of operating grants from the Province, its ability to continue viable operations is dependent upon the decisions of the Province.

10. Financial instruments

The Council's current financial instruments recognized on the balance sheet consist of cash, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. The carrying values of these instruments approximate current fair value due to their nature and the short-term maturity associated with them.

11. Comparative figures

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with the current year's presentation.

12. Income taxes

The Council is a Crown entity of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and as such is not subject to Provincial or Federal income taxes.

Office of the Auditor General

Appendix I: Biographical Information

Back row (L-R): Danielle Finney, Phyllis Seymour, Elaine Wychreschuk, Yamuna Kutty, Mary Pia Benuen, Vanessa MacArthur, Hilda Whelan, Leslie MacLeod.
Front row (L-R): Michelle Murdoch, Carolyn Lavers, Annie Evans, Sandy Abbott.
Missing from photo: Phyllis Artiss, Jackie Jenkins.

2007-2008 Advisory Council Members:

Leslie MacLeod, St. John's – President:

Leslie has over 25 years of experience with numerous local, regional and national feminist and equality-seeking organizations. She is an experienced adult educator and community development workers. Leslie has an extensive history of involvement as an advocate for women's equality and disability rights. She was involved with the Court Challenges Program of Canada for more than six years, during which time she served as the Co-chair of the Equality Panel and as a member of the Board of Directors.

Phyllis Artiss, St. John's – Vice-President:

Phyllis is serving her third term on the Advisory Council and has been an active member since 2000. She has also been involved with the St. John's Status of Women Council for many years. A retired Memorial University professor, Phyllis has served on several boards and worked on many projects relating to women's issues and equality including the *Let's Teach About Women* project. Her volunteer schedule is so busy it's impossible to believe she's retired.

Mary Pia Benuen, Sheshatshiu – Council Member:

Through hard work and many sacrifices, Mary Pia was the first Innu woman to become a nurse. She is a true community leader involved in health promotion, facilitating workshops and community research. She sits on a number of community advisory groups. Mary Pia volunteers with the Family Resource Centre and is always willing to go that extra mile with families experiencing hardship including providing emotional support when suicide or death occurs. Mary Pia and her daughter live in Sheshatshiu.

Annie Evans, Makkovik – Council Member:

Annie is passionate about advancing the status of women in Labrador and reclaiming Aboriginal culture. She has worked closely with the Paukuutit Inuit Women's Association of Canada and is a strong voice for Inuit women's issues. Annie is also a tireless advocate and educator when it comes to promoting health in Labrador. She has been involved with the Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives Organization (NIICHRO) since the mid-eighties.

Jackie Jenkins, Grand Falls-Windsor – Council Member:

Jackie is a practising lawyer. Her legal practice and volunteer work enable her to analyze and address numerous women's equality issues. Jackie's involvements include the South and Central Health Care Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society. Among other issues, she has a keen interest in women's access to justice, education and violence against women and children. Jackie is a proud feminist constantly balancing family life, work and community commitments.

Yamuna Kutty, St. John's – Council Member:

Yamuna is the President of the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador. She has also served on the St. John's Status of Women Council, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada. Yamuna is involved with numerous projects and initiatives. She brings critical perspectives about the lives of immigrant and refugee women to our work along with a warm and caring heart. She has an extremely busy volunteer schedule.

Carolyn Lavers, Port au Choix – Council Member:

Carolyn is an Economic Development Officer with the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development in Port au Choix. She is a small business entrepreneur and worked with the former Women's Enterprise Bureau. Carolyn has served on the boards of several local business development boards and other community agencies. She is also deeply concerned about issues related to violence, rural child care solutions, women's employment and women in leadership. She brings great dedication and insight to our work.

Vanessa MacArthur, Port aux Basques – Council Member:

Vanessa is an Employment Counsellor at the Career Information Resource Centre in the Port aux Basques area. In addition, she currently serves as chair of the Regional Economic Development Board in her region and is past President of the Gateway Status of Women Council. Vanessa understands the issues having worked with the Women's Centre in previous years. She works from a grassroots perspective, helping women with issues ranging from employment and training to child care and violence. She is a determined and eloquent advocate for women's equality. She is also a talented singer/songwriter with two CDs to her credit.

Michelle Murdoch, St. John's – Council Member:

Michelle is a determined feminist with a disability. She is past chair of the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC), a cross disability service organization. Michelle earned her Master's in Women's Studies from Memorial University. As part of her program, she completed a participatory action research project about women with disabilities and employment. Her interests extend across a broad range of social justice issues including poverty, employment and education. She is keenly analytical and always ready to ask the important questions.

Phyllis Seymour, Little Bay Islands – Council Member:

Phyllis received the Governor General's Person's Case Award in 1998. She is a former social worker with a long-standing history of involvement with social justice and equality issues. Phyllis is a former administrator of Emmanuel House and is well known for mentoring others involved in critical equality-seeking community work. She is extremely concerned about violence against women and children and is a strong child care advocate. She brings great wisdom and passion to the work of the Advisory Council.

Hilda Whelan, Whitbourne – Council Member:

Hilda was instrumental in fighting for women's rights in a case involving surviving spouses and the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission. She solely represented and fought for all widows involved in the case for 15 years ultimately winning an important victory for women's equality. Hilda is a strong advocate concerned about a wide variety of issues affecting women including violence and access to child care. She brings the realities of rural women to the work of the Advisory Council and is determined to keep making a difference.

Advisory Council Staff:

Sandy Abbott – Office Manager:

Sandy has an extensive work history in a variety of sectors including health care, Government, not-for-profit and private business. She is experienced in all aspects of office administration, has been an adult educator in a private college setting and holds a Diploma in Computer Studies. Sandy has also served on the executive of a number of not-for-profit organizations and has a special interest in learning disabilities and drug abuse issues. Sandy lives in St. John's with her daughter, son and two adopted beagles.

Danielle Finney – Communications Director:

Danielle was raised in northern Saskatchewan and moved to St. John's in 1996 to do a Master's of Women's Studies at Memorial University. After graduate school, she became the Coordinator of the St. John's Status of Women Council. Danielle left the Province in 2002 to travel and to do a journalism degree at Ryerson University. She returned here to work as a reporter in Labrador for CBC Radio before joining our staff in May 2007. Danielle's passion for feminism and love of words make her a perfect fit for this position.

Elaine Wychreschuk – Policy Analyst:

Elaine moved to Newfoundland and Labrador in 1974 after spending her early years in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon. Before pursuing a law degree, her interests and employment were varied and included textile arts and community development. For over 15 years, she practised criminal and family law working for both the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission and the Department of Justice. In all her endeavours, she has been committed to improving the status of women and pursuing equality for everyone. With a home base in St. John's, she has travelled to virtually every community in the Province.

Appendix II: Values

Commitment:

Each individual applies feminist principles when asserting equality and challenging inequality, thereby affecting social change.

Responsiveness:

Each individual responds to request in a time-efficient manner, meeting the changing needs of the women's community as issues emerge.

Inclusiveness:

Each individual works to ensure that all opinions and knowledge are considered so that the strength that exists in the collective voice of women is sustained and enriched by the diversity of women's perspectives.

Learning:

Each individual continues to educate herself about women's inequality as a means of fulfilling her responsibility as a feminist leader.

Safety:

Each individual contributes to the creation of a respectful environment that ensures women have a safe place to speak openly about inequities.

Celebration:

Each individual acknowledges both the challenges and the joys of working with and for women and celebrates our collective achievements.

Equity, Equality and
Inclusion for Women

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

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